

### **What you need to understand as the person calling to report abuse:**

As difficult as it may seem, a competent adult has the right to refuse the investigation and refuse services.

The alleged victim may refuse to admit there is abuse occurring as they may be afraid of retaliation, being believed by others, having to leave their home, and/or feeling ashamed that the abuse occurred.

In most situations it is important for family and friends to remain involved and to provide emotional support and encouragement. Assist the person in considering other alternatives to what their situation currently is. Don't expect changes overnight.

An elder/vulnerable adult has a right to live in an environment that is consistent with their lifestyle and cultural choices.

### **Mission Statement**

Providing quality services for individuals and families in a safe, supportive, respectful partnership by promoting health, well-being, and self-sufficiency.

### **Vision Statement**

To promote safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency for the individuals of Juneau County. We strive to do so by remaining open-minded to the ideas and suggestions of others; provide person-centered services in the least intrusive and least restrictive way possible; collaborate with our departments and community partners; to function with integrity in all matters, manage public resources responsibly; and acknowledge the values and beliefs of others in a courteous and respectful manner.

### **Juneau County Department of Human Services**

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### **Office Hours**

Monday through Friday  
8:00am - 4:30pm



## **Juneau County Department of Human Services**

### **Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Neglect**

Adult at Risk (age 18-59); Elder (age 60+)

# Elder/Vulnerable Adult Abuse and Neglect

## What is APS?

Adult Protective Services (APS) help elder adults and adults at risk who have been abused, neglected, or financially exploited. APS are any services that stop an individual from inflicting harm on themselves or another person.



### **Financial Exploitation:**

Use of a person's personal checks, credit cards, or accounts for their own needs as if the money belonged to them. Announcements of a "prize" that the elderly person has won but must pay for is more than likely a scam.

### **Self Neglect:**

Failure to provide essential basic care needs that threatens their own health and safety.

### **Care Taker Neglect:**

Failure to provide food, shelter, health care, or protection by a person whose agreed to take on the responsibility.

### **Physical Abuse:**

Inflicting physical pain or injury.

### **Hoarding of animals or possessions:**

Could be a sign of untreated anxiety or untreated depression. Help through a Mental Health Therapist should be encouraged. They must be willing to accept the help or see that there is a need for help.

## What happens during an APS investigation?

It depends on the reported abuse and the willingness of the elder/vulnerable adult.

- A visit to the residence of the elder/vulnerable person at risk. This is to obtain their viewpoint, their strengths, their concerns, and needs.
- The visit is private unless the person requests otherwise.
- Interviewing other people may be necessary; such as a care taker, physician, neighbors, or financial institution. These occur with the knowledge of the elder/vulnerable adult and with signed releases of information if necessary.
- In cases of financial exploitation, the local police department may become involved to investigate and determine what type of crime was committed.

**The Juneau County Adult Protective Services team cannot investigate allegations of caretaker abuse to elders or vulnerable adults who reside in Community Based Residential Facilities or in Nursing Homes. These concerns should be directed to the State Department of Health and Family Services.**

## What can you do as a concerned friend or family member?

- Call and visit often to be aware of what is happening
- If you are noticing bruises or injuries that aren't consistent with the reported events, ask the elder/vulnerable adult privately
- Medications: Take a look at their prescriptions. Are they requiring constant refilling before the refill date, or do medications remain in the bottle untaken, outdated medications
- Talk to and attempt to understand what is happening from their perspective



## Signs of a person who may be an abuser:

- Won't allow the elder/vulnerable adult to speak for themselves or insists on being present or listening into the visit or phone call at all times
- Withholding of basic needs or money as a way to control the elder/vulnerable adult
- Socially isolating the elder/vulnerable adults from family or friends
- Conflicting story of a financial situation or occurrence of injury
- Unwilling or reluctant to have services or service providers in the home to help with planning of care